

From: [Abby Arnold](#)
To: [City Council Public Comments](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Study Session on future use of 4th Street
Date: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 5:10:21 PM

Dear Mayor Stapp and Council Members:

Each week during the Wednesday Night Market in May, June, and July I set up a booth for Santa Rosa YIMBY. Our goal was to engage people in discussions about walkability and housing in downtown Santa Rosa. I spoke with hundreds of people over the 12 weeks of the market.

As a community activist over more than 50 years, the proposal to "pedestrianize 4th Street" was the least controversial and most widely supported issue I've ever discussed with members of the general public. People's faces brightened when they saw our petition, and they were eager to sign in support of making 4th Street a pedestrian area free of cars.

Many people recalled how much they enjoyed being outside on 4th Street without cars during the pandemic. People with children and those who use mobility devices were especially excited that the City is considering prohibiting cars in an area where they like to come to be in community with other Santa Rosa residents and enjoy the restaurants, bars, and shops without fear of being hit by a car. The popularity of the Wednesday Night Market demonstrates that members of our community like to gather downtown when it is safe from cars.

I encourage you to read [this substack post](#) about vibrant (versus boring) downtowns in the Bay Area to get the perspective of someone who is half my age. Speaking for myself, I would love to hang out at downtown bars and restaurants, and to shop more often downtown. What keeps me away is the dominance of cars in our lovely downtown area. We need to make our downtown a place where we can meet friends and have conversations without fear that we will be crushed by a 4,000 lb vehicle, or having the smell of exhaust fumes overwhelm the delicious food and drink we can enjoy on our beautiful 4th Street.

As my Wednesday night market interactions with Santa Rosa residents confirmed, there is lots of support for creating a car-free zone on 4th Street. I know it will take courage to take this step, but I believe you agree that it is worth it to give residents the opportunity to socialize together, have fun, and be safe from being hit by a car while we take advantage of all downtown Santa Rosa has to offer.

Very truly yours,

Abby Arnold
Montgomery Village resident

From: [California Luggage](#)
To: [_CityCouncilListPublic](#); cadanceh@santarosametrochamber.com
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] street closure
Date: Friday, September 5, 2025 1:12:24 PM

Dear Councilmembers –

I am resending my comments to you in anticipation of Tuesday's study session, as I see that they are not included in the Correspondence section of the Staff Report. As you'll note, only the YIMBY comments are attached.

I hope you will consider the fact that downtown Santa Rosa is a regional destination, and balance the concerns of the business community as you approach this issue.

Attached to my original email to you were comments that I left at the community meeting, which I hope are still available to you. (It would have been helpful if the Yimby members were present at the community meetings, but that position was never publicly represented.)

Thank you for your consideration.

Bernie Schwartz
California Luggage

From: Guasco, Cher <cguasco@srcity.org>
Sent: Monday, June 23, 2025 1:19 PM
To: California Luggage <caluggage@att.net>
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] street closure

Good afternoon,

Thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts with the City Council. We appreciate input from our community. All City Councilmembers, as well as the City Manager, have received your email, and I have also forwarded it to the appropriate department.

Sincerely,

Cher L. Guasco | Senior Administrative Assistant

City Manager's Office | 100 Santa Rosa Ave, Rm 10 | Santa Rosa, CA 95404
Tel. (707) 543-4647 | Fax (707) 543-3030 | cguasco@srcity.org



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From: California Luggage <caluggage@att.net>
Sent: Wednesday, June 18, 2025 2:23 PM
Cc: _CityCouncilListPublic <citycouncil@srcity.org>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] street closure

Dear Councilmembers –

Having been on 4th St. at California Luggage for 45 years, I'm a longtime downtown booster. Recently, Economic Development hosted a meeting for downtown business and property owners, during which discussions were had about the concept of closing down several blocks of 4th St. Staff has been collecting information for the last year or so from downtown businesses, who have been (as staff knows) almost unanimous in their opposition to the idea, but both a recent survey, as well as the meeting agenda seemed pointed toward a pre-determined result.

Attached please find a brief note of concerns that I left with staff at the meeting, stating the importance of the downtown as both a regional as well as a community destination, with many visitors older, or from out of town. Access and visibility would be sacrificed in a wholesale street closure, as well as the isolation of a barricaded street at night.

I hope you will consider the consequences of this plan, which seems motivated by what is at best an aspirational vision of a 'carless environment' that may or may not attract folks downtown, while sacrificing the access and visibility that our business community needs.

Thank you,
Bernie Schwartz
California Luggage

From: [andrew rich](#)
To: [_CityCouncilListPublic](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Pedestrianizing 4th st
Date: Monday, September 8, 2025 12:44:09 PM

Hi There,

The city should move to quickly pedestrianize 4th st. It will improve business downtown, make downtown a more attractive place to visit and hangout, and bring increased revenues to the City.

Please act quickly and make this happen

Andy Rich

From: [Victor](#)
To: [City Council Public Comments](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] 9/9/2025 City Council meeting, Agenda item 4.1
Date: Monday, September 8, 2025 2:49:40 PM

City Councilmembers and staff,

I'm a longtime Santa Rosa resident and frequent downtown visitor. I appreciate that you're looking into the feasibility of pedestrianizing the downtown segment of Fourth Street. A well-executed project has the potential to be transformational for the downtown area and by extension the whole city, and I am wholly in support of it.

The City Council could of course decline to pursue the project, but I'm actually more concerned about the possibility of an overly conservative, half-hearted pilot. A project like this will always have some downsides, albeit likely fewer than what its detractors will likely claim. A too limited version of pedestrianization can manifest those downsides without fully realizing the benefits. The pilot might then be shut down and the concept shelved for decades.

In previous meetings, an idea was floated to focus first on pedestrianizing Ross Street, between Mendocino Ave and B St. This segment is short, with almost half of its frontage being surface parking lots. A pedestrian plaza here would not attract local or out-of-town visitors. Those that did visit would not have many amenities to choose from and wouldn't stay long. Such a project would likely fail, serving only to "validate" the opposition.

Another option would be an intermittent project in Fourth St proper, with set hours and limited pedestrian infrastructure. This, too, can be too little to realize the full benefits. The Wednesday Night Market proves that this type of pedestrian space is still great. However, for a project to truly succeed, there needs to be something to attract people other than a scheduled event. Successful pedestrianization projects incorporate greenery, placemaking, ample seating outside businesses, and games for all ages. Those qualities are not easily removable for frequent activations. Successful projects are also large enough to provide a variety of businesses and space to wander, something one block or less is unlikely to achieve.

Ideally, a pedestrianization project should be pursued as the legacy-building, city-shaping project it could be. From E to B St, Third to Fifth St, with permanent features and a mechanism to maintain and improve it in the future. With allowances for commercial deliveries, accessible parking, and first responders. The inconvenience of able-bodied drivers parking 100ft farther, and perhaps the opposition of business owners afraid of change, should be an exceedingly small price to pay for what could be vibrant community space that improves business activity, tourism, and quality of life.

-Victor Delpanno

From: [AJ Trombetta](#)
To: [City Council Public Comments](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Agenda Item 4.1 9/9/25 meeting - Fourth St Closure
Date: Monday, September 8, 2025 4:37:03 PM

Honorable City Council Members,
I have been following discussions and participated in a survey regarding proposed Pedestrianization and 4th St Closure. I support a pilot program or entertainment zone pilot on Ross or Depot Park.

I haven't grasped the tangible benefit of closing upper 4th since the Courthouse Square area is already so large. I also haven't grasped the correlation between 4th St pedestrianization and sales tax revenue. I've also heard the concerns of 4th St anchor merchants whose business could be hurt by the closure. I feel like funds could be better spent on walkability infrastructure, coordination of events and marketing, and an entertainment zone pilot program.

I echo the concerns expressed in the Downtown Action Organization's March 2025 Memo regarding the Pedestrianization Concept.

Infrastructure improvements would benefit walkability and shopping in all downtown areas. These include: improved trash/recycling receptacles and their maintenance; underpass lighting and security features for 3rd, 4th and 5th and 6th Streets so pedestrians feel safe walking from SMART to Ross and Courthouse Square areas; art and mural improvements, other capital improvements or private facade improvement grants in high visibility downtown pedestrian areas.

A coordinated event and marketing strategy for all of downtown including RRSQ, Courthouse Square, the Plaza and Brickyard Center. We welcome city support and marketing for coordinated events like last year's Festivities on Fourth. I see Windsor marketing its Summer Nights on the Green on SMART and would love to see similar programming marketing for coordinated Santa Rosa events.

Thank you for your service to Santa Rosa's communities!

Best wishes,
A.J. Trombetta (she/her)
24 4th LLC property owner representative
Railroad Square Association board member